

ADULT EDUCATION IN THE POST 9/11 WORLD: REFLECTIONS ONE YEAR LATER

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What is our place in the global community? For many, the tragedies of September 11, 2001 have elevated this question to a level of seriousness that goes well beyond a simple intellectual exercise. Issues of politics, power, and power relations have reached a heightened sense of saliency among adult educators and learners alike. A sense of interconnectedness with others in the world seems to be increasing. At the same time, some of the anger, suffering, and pain experienced in the wake of 9/11 has resulted in calls for retaliation against targeted groups and increased expressions of intolerance for diversity, different beliefs and different voices.

Indeed, there have been many public responses to the events of 9/11 from the leaders of prominent organizations of higher education. They all speak to the important role that adult educators and learners have to contribute to a greater understanding of our collective place in the global community.

Yet, it is important to ask how has 9/11 shown up in the classroom and other learning environments. Has it been like the elephant in the living room that no one wants to mention because feelings of loss and grief are too intense? Is it so present that it has to be included as part of the process, regardless of the content of a course? Has the nature of learning changed? Has the impact shifted as time has passed? It would make sense that the range of responses varies greatly. Little has been published to date, whether as anecdotal accounts or planned research, about how 9/11 has affected the day-to-day practice of adult educators. *This poster presentation will contribute to this area by exploring the impact that the events and aftermath of September 11, 2001 have had on the work of the authors, both of whom are adult educators.*

We have reflected on how the actual events, our learners' and our own responses to the 9/11 tragedies have affected our specific educational practices. In this poster presentation, we will share the questions that have emerged for us, while identifying dilemmas and issues that we have encountered as we support student learning. We, the authors, hope to foster dialogue about how to utilize the emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and other types of responses to 9/11 as a catalyst for learning larger lessons that can support transformative educational practice.

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